

The Bible Church Solemnization of Marriages



Introduction

1. From time to time, the Church has been approached by different ones to solemnise their marriages or to officiate at their wedding services. They could be church members, associate members, regular worshippers or even ex- regular worshippers or close relatives of members. This document sets out information pertaining to The Bible Church's policies and procedures on the solemnization and officiating of marriages.

Policy on Solemnization of Marriages

2. For the Church to solemnise the marriage or officiate at a wedding ceremony, both the bride and groom ought to be born again Christians¹, and at least one party of the couple must be a member of the Church. (If the couple are not yet members by the time of their solemnization, they will undertake to take up church membership within a year of their solemnization.

3. The couple should also have the intention to make The Bible Church, Singapore, their home church after marriage (unless the couple is or will be residing overseas) so that the local community can support them in their marriage journey.

4. Prior to the couple's registration with the Registry of Marriages (ROM), the couple is required to (a) complete the Pre-Marital Counselling Course (PMC) conducted by the Church and (b) have at least four sessions with the assigned marriage counsellors. These sessions are based on the assessment tool (Prepare & Enrich) that every couple has to take online. The Church will only solemnise the marriage if, based on the findings from the PMC and the assessment of the assigned marriage counsellors, that the couple is mature and ready for marriage. For overseas couple, they will have to obtain a letter from their pastor to ascertain that they are deemed suitable for marriage and have gone through a marriage prep course.

5. In keeping with Scripture's teaching about keeping the body pure for one's marriage partner, a couple who had previously engaged in pre-marital sex should cease doing so, live separately and seek help in the process of marriage counselling.

6. The Church will only officiate at wedding ceremony involving persons who have not been previously married. In the event that this is not so, the Elder/Pastor shall decide on the eligibility on a case by case basis, after discussion with the couple and consultation with the Elders' Board.

¹ II Cor. 6:14-16. Our solemnisers will ascertain this through their personal meetings and interviews with the couples. Note that Annexes A & B also ascertain their spiritual background, including whether they are born-again Christians.

* Delete where applicable

Policy on Marriage Blessing

7. Marriage blessing ceremony may be conducted in place of a wedding ceremony when the couple has already solemnised their marriage at the ROM.² The Church generally discourages such practice of having separate solemnisation and marriage blessing ceremonies. However, if a marriage blessing is to be held, paras 2, 3 and 4 of this policy governing the solemnization of marriages will apply. In addition, the couple must agree to the following:

- a. *The invitation cards will clearly indicate that it is a marriage blessing ceremony rather than a wedding service;*
- b. *The officiating minister will conduct it as a blessing (as opposed to a wedding) service and will publicly inform the guests of the date of the couple's wedding (i.e. their registration date) during the service. (See Annex E for sample order of a Blessing Ceremony)*

8. As a general rule, the marriage blessing should not be longer than a year from when the marriage was solemnised at the ROM.

Procedures for Getting Married

9. The couple intending to be married must prayerfully consider their decision and plans for marriage before the Lord. They are to inform the Pastor-in-Charge **preferably at least 12 months** before the intended date of the solemnization. Application for their marriage to be solemnized by the Church must be made in the Application Form in Annex B.

10. Upon receiving the application form for solemnization from the couple, the Pastor-in-Charge will arrange for an interview. The couple will be advised to attend the pre-marital counselling course organized by the Church and must complete the course **preferably at least 6 months** before the date of solemnization. The application form for the Course is attached in Annex A. After the course, the couple will be assigned a Marriage Counsellor who will provide them with one to one counselling for at least four sessions. Consent to solemnize the marriage will only be given by the Pastor based on the recommendation of the assigned marriage counsellors that the couple is ready for marriage. The Marriage Counsellor will sign a form indicating the couple's readiness and suitability for marriage.

11. The Church will assign a Marriage Mentor to encourage the couple in their marriage. Should the couple find their mentor to be unsuitable, they may choose their own Mentor and inform the Pastor-in-Charge.

12. If the couple intends to hold their solemnization in the Church, they are required to apply for the use of the Sanctuary and other facilities to the CBC Management Committee through the Church Office **preferably at least 12 months** before the intended date of the

² One common reason for having the marriage solemnised at the ROM prior to the church service is for the purpose of obtaining a Housing Development Board (HDB) flat. However, from past experience, the HDB will grant an extension of the deadline to produce the marriage certificate upon receipt of a letter from the Church verifying the couples' intent to get married.

* Delete where applicable

solemnization, subject to the availability of facilities.

13. To file a Notice of Marriage with the Registry of Marriages (ROM), the couple needs to go to the website www.rom.gov.sg to submit their application. ROM accepts only online applications. The couple is to obtain a hard copy of the 'Invitation to Solemnise a Marriage Form' duly signed by the Pastor who is authorize to solemnize the marriage, and have it submitted to the ROM on the day of verification of documents. See Annex C.

14. The Women's Charter requires the couple to file a Notice of Marriage **at least 21 days** ahead of the solemnization (day of filing and solemnization excluded). The notice should **not be earlier than 3 months** before solemnization. For example, 2 January is the earliest date and 10 March is the latest date to file a Notice of Marriage for solemnization on 2 April. As the day of issuing the marriage licence may fall on a Sunday or Public Holiday, it is safer for couples to file the Notice of Marriage **at least 25 days ahead of the solemnization date**.

15. The couple shall meet the Solemniser at least 3 months before the date of solemnization to discuss the wedding preparation and the programme. A sample of the wedding programme are attached in Annex D below. The Solemniser will brief and advise the couple the service order with regards to the choice of songs and Scripture, the person giving the exhortation, the wedding vows (if personalized, it will have to reflect the essence of the vows as a covenant of love and faithfulness), and the appropriate dressing. The service order and vows must be approved at least one week before the wedding. The solemnizer will also require a marriage counsellor's consent form (Annex F) to be filled in before solemnizing the wedding. This is to ensure that the couple have been adequately prepared for their marriage.

After You Say 'I Do': Marriage Mentoring

16. As noted in #11, the couple will be assigned a Marriage Mentor (a mature couple who have been married at least 5 years) who will journey with them in their first year of marriage. This will constitute two to six meetings, and it will be a time of building friendship, sharing experiences, asking questions, dialoging on marital issues/concerns, etc., in a more informal, friendly and relaxed setting.

Contact Persons (& Licensed Solemnisers):

Pastor Lim Wei-en [9789-7438], weien@biblechurch.sg

Mr Timothy Lee [9753-9752], timothy@biblechurch.sg

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* Delete where applicable

THE BIBLE CHURCH

APPLICATION FOR PRE-MARITAL COUNSELLING COURSE

Name³: _____

Email Address: _____

Tel (H): _____ (O) _____ (HP) _____

Age: _____ Gender: Male / Female * Date of Birth: _____

Marital Status: Single/Divorced/Widower/Others* Nationality: _____

Church: _____ Member: Yes / No *

Spiritual Background

1. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour? Yes / No *

2. Are you attending Church regularly? Yes / No *

If yes, which Church? _____

For how long? _____

3. Have you been baptized? Yes / No* If Yes, when? _____

4. Church membership (indicate name and effective date) _____

Interest:

I am interested in the following (please tick):

- to know more about preparation for marriage.
- to prepare for my engagement.
- to prepare for my marriage.
- others (please specify) _____

³ Each partner should submit a copy of the form.

* Delete where applicable

THE BIBLE CHURCH

APPLICATION FOR SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE

Particulars of Bridegroom-to-Be

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel (H): _____ (O) _____ (HP) _____

Email: _____

Age: _____ Gender: Male / Female * Date of Birth: _____

Marital Status: Single/Divorced/Widower/Others* Nationality: _____

Church: _____ Member: Yes / No *

Spiritual Background

1. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour? Yes / No *

2. Are you attending Church regularly? Yes / No *

If yes, which Church and for how long? _____

3. Have you been baptized? Yes / No* If Yes, when? _____

Address & Contact Number After Marriage (if available):

Address: _____

Tel No (H) _____ Email Address _____

* Delete where applicable

Particulars of Bride-to-Be

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel (H): _____ (O) _____ (HP) _____

Email: _____

Age: _____ Gender: Male / Female * Date of Birth: _____

Marital Status: Single/Divorced/Widow/Others* Nationality: _____

Church: _____ Member: Yes / No *

Spiritual Background

1. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour? Yes / No *

2. Are you attending Church regularly? Yes / No *

If yes, which Church and for how long? _____

3. Have you been baptized? Yes / No* If Yes, when? _____

Registration of Marriage with ROM

1. Intended Date of E-filing of Marriage with ROM: _____

2. Intended Date of Wedding: _____

Note:

1. Bride and groom can e-file the notice of marriage to the ROM 3 months before the date of the solemnization.

2. A marriage can be solemnized anytime after the 21-day notice and before the expiry of the 3-month validity period.

* Delete where applicable

INVITATION TO SOLEMNISE A MARRIAGE (to be completed by groom and bride)

Date: _____

Dear _____ (*Licensed Solemniser*)

1. We cordially invite you to solemnise our marriage on _____(date)

at _____(time) _____(full address of venue)

2. Our details are given below:

	Name	NRIC/PP	Contact	Correspondence Address
Groom				
Bride				

3. We note the 21 days rule and other legal requirements and will go to **www.rom.gov.sg** to file a notice of marriage.

4. Thank you for volunteering your time and efforts to grace our special occasion.

*Yours Sincerely,*_____
Signature of Groom_____
Signature of Bride**REPLY** (to be completed by Licensed Solemniser)*Dear Groom and Bride*

Heartiest Congratulations! I am pleased to accept your invitation. Please call me to confirm our appointment **3 working days before solemnisation** (Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm only) regardless of whether you have collected your marriage documents from ROM. If I do not hear from you, the appointment is deemed cancelled.

Signature _____

Licence No: _____

Name of Licensed Solemniser: _____

Date: _____

Do not fax. This form is to be handed over by the couple to ROM on the day of verification of documents.

Sample

The Holy Matrimony

of

on

at

The Bible Church, Singapore

ORDER OF SERVICE

Processional*

Opening Prayer

Praise & Worship

Scripture Reading

Exhortation

Solemnization of Marriage

Signing of Marriage Register

(Special Item)?*

Closing Song/Hymn

Benediction

Recessional*

Thanksgiving Speech by Bride & Groom

*Songs chosen should be in good taste and reflect Christian values

**CHURCH BLESSING
OF A CIVIL MARRIAGE**

1. PREAMBLE

Dear family members and friends, we are gathered here in the presence of God to witness the affirmation and blessing of the civil marriage of <husband's name> and <wife's name>. For good reasons, <husband> and <wife> were legally married at ROM (or venue) on <date>. It is their desire, however, to have this blessing in the house of God, so that before Him, we may all celebrate together their union as husband and wife.

<husband> and <wife>, you have committed yourselves to each other in marriage. The church understands marriage to be a holy institution ordained by God who created the male and female for each other. The Lord Jesus himself graced a wedding in Cana of Galilee with His presence and power. The apostle Paul commended the marriage relationship as signifying the special union between Christ and the Church.

As such, marriage is therefore not to be entered into lightly or rashly, but thoughtfully, reverently, and in humble acknowledgement of God's will over our lives, and with careful consideration of the purposes of marriage.

First, marriage was firstly ordained for the lifelong companionship, help and encouragement which husband and wife ought to have for each other.

Second, it was ordained for the holy ordinance of family life that children, who are the gift of the Lord, should be duly nurtured and brought up in godliness.

Finally, it was ordained for the welfare of human society, which can be strong and happy only where the marriage bond is held in honor.

It is into such a relationship that the <husband> and <wife> have been joined and now come before God and you, their family members and friends, to be blessed.

2. THE QUESTIONS

To affirm the marriage covenant they have made, I will ask them these important questions. First to the husband: <husband>, have you taken <wife> as your lawfully wedded wife, to live together according to God's Word in the holy institution of matrimony? ("*I have*") Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in all circumstances, and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for her, so long as you both shall live? ("*I will.*")

Now to the wife: <wife>, have you taken <husband> as your lawfully wedded husband, to live together according to God's Word in the holy institution of matrimony? ("*I have*") Will you love him, serve him, honor and submit to him in the Lord, in all circumstances, and,

forsaking all others, keep yourself only for him, so long as you both shall live? ("I will.")

3. THE RENEWAL OF THE WEDDING VOWS:

We will now witness the renewal of the wedding vows.

I <husband> reaffirm my commitment to take you <wife> as my wedded wife, to have and to hold, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, to lead, and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's Word; and for this I give you my solemn pledge.

I <wife> reaffirm my commitment to take you <husband> as my wedded husband, to have and to hold, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, to cherish, and to submit in the Lord, till death do us part, according to God's Word; and for this I give you my solemn pledge.

4. THE RING VOWS (If not done at ROM)

To seal their marriage vows, <husband> and <wife> will now give and receive the marriage rings.

"This ring, a complete circle, signifies the emblem of eternity, and the precious metal, the emblem of purity. May this ring ever remind you of the vows you just made, that you will remain faithful and devoted to each other all the days of your lives."

<husband to wife, followed by wife to husband> *I give you this ring, as a sign of my vow, and a pledge of my love. With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you, within the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

5. THE PRAYER OF BLESSING

6. THE PRONOUNCEMENT

Now that <husband> and <wife> have declared their love before God and this congregation, given themselves once again to each other through the renewal of their wedding vows and the exchange of rings, I affirm and bless them as husband and wife, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

As God's Word commands us, *"Those whom God has joined together, let no man put asunder."* Amen.

7. THE UNVEILING OF THE WIFE (optional, see additional notes)

8. PRESENTATION OF REGISTER & OF HUSBAND & WIFE

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<husband> and <wife> have previously signed their register at ROM, but I would at this time like to hand them again their marriage certificate so as to re-affirm their status as husband and wife in your presence. (Hand Marriage Certificate to the couple).

Family members and friends, I now present to you, once again, Mr. & Mrs. <husband's name>.

9. CLOSING PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Processional and The Questions

Given that at ROM, a bride does not typically wear a wedding gown and is not “given away” by her father, the church blessing ceremony might be an occasion for these.

As such, the wife is allowed to put on a wedding gown for the ceremony and her father (or main caregiver while growing up) is allowed to walk her down the aisle during the processional as a mark of honour, as well as to indicate his blessing and support of the marriage. In similar vein, the father (or main caregiver) may be asked, “who has given <wife> to be married to <husband>?” before the questions are asked of the wife and husband.

However, if the pastor conducting the blessing ascertains, together with the husband and wife, that the above is unnecessary, then both husband and wife may walk down the aisle together during the processional, and no question needs to be directed to the wife's main caregiver.

Ring Vows and The Prayer of Blessing

If rings have already been exchanged at ROM, the pastor may choose to incorporate a blessing of the rings in the prayer of blessing:

Bless, O Lord, these rings which serve as reminders of the vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other in the past and have reaffirmed that choice before us today, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Unveiling of the Wife

This is an act typically done during a solemnization as it symbolizes the self-giving of the bride to the groom. Traditionally, the veil also symbolizes virginity.

However, given that the husband and wife have already been legally married and might already have consummated their marriage, the unveiling of the wife holds less significance, and might therefore be omitted from the ceremony. If for ceremonial reasons or if for some

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reasons, the couple have lived apart and remained chaste despite the legal status of their marriage, the unveiling can still take place.

**Marriage Counsellor's
COMPLETION FORM**

I/We, _____, marriage counsellors of _____ and _____, hereby ascertain that they are ready for marriage, having ...

Please Tick	Content/Processes
	Gone through five sessions of the Marriage Prep Course
	Taken the Prepare & Enrich Assessment Tool
	Spent at least four sessions of marriage counselling with me/us, covering the following topics (please tick where relevant): Communication Conflict Resolution Partner Style and Habits Financial Management Leisure Activities Sexuality and Affection Family and Friends Relationship Roles Children and Parenting Spiritual Beliefs
	Not consummated their relationship, and if so, have ceased doing so, and are now living separately.

Do you have any comments or concerns concerning the couple's relationship or readiness for marriage?

Signature

Date